

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant	:	James Rist) Group Art Unit Unknown
)
Appl. No.	:	Unknown)
)
Filed	:	Herewith)
)
For	:	BILL ACCEPTOR FOR A)
		GAMING MACHINE)
)
Examiner	:	Unknown)

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Dear Sir:

Prior to examination, please amend the above referenced application as follows:

IN THE ABSTRACT:

Please amend the abstract as follows:

Abstract of the Disclosure

A bill acceptor for a gaming machine including a receiving zone for receiving a tendered bill. A sensing device is arranged at an input region of the receiving zone for sensing at least one characteristic of the bill. A controller is in communication with the sensing device for receiving an output signal from the sensing device. An annunciator is controlled by the controller to be activated when a bill acceptance rate of the controller drops below a predetermined threshold.

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IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the Claims as follows:

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

5. (Amended) The bill acceptor of Claim 2, in which the receiving zone includes an indicator for indicating to a patron where the bill is to be inserted into the slot.

6. (Amended) The bill acceptor of Claim 5, in which the indicator comprises an array of illuminating elements arranged in the platen of the receiving zone.

10. (Amended) The bill acceptor of Claim 1, in which, when the controller is connected to a network, a network monitoring system monitors the acceptance rate of bills by the controller and activates an alarm when the acceptance rate drops below the predetermined threshold.

12. (Amended) The method of Claim 11, further comprising illuminating elements of the bill acceptor in a predetermined pattern and, when the bill acceptance rate drops below the threshold, energizing the illuminating elements in a second, different pattern, the second pattern of illumination of the illuminating elements serving as the annuciator.

14. (Amended) The method of Claim 11, further comprising transmitting a signal on a network to which the gaming machine is connected to a network monitoring system to activate an alarm when the bill acceptance rate drops below the predetermined threshold.

Please add the following new Claims:

15. (New) A gaming machine network comprising a plurality of gaming machines wherein each gaming machine includes a bill acceptor that has a receiving zone for receiving tendered bills and a sensing device in the receiving zone for sensing at least one characteristic of the tendered bills, wherein the gaming machine networks receives signals from the sensing device so as to be able to ascertain a bill acceptance rate.

16. (New) The gaming machine network of Claim 15, wherein each of the plurality of gaming machines includes a controller that is in communication with the sensing device and wherein the controller determines a bill acceptance rate of the tendered bills and communicates the bill acceptance rate to the gaming machine network.

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17. (New) The gaming machine network of Claim 16, further comprising an annunciator that is activated when the bill acceptance rate drops below a predetermined threshold.

18. (New) The gaming machine network of Claim 17, wherein the annunciator is provided at the gaming machines.

REMARKS

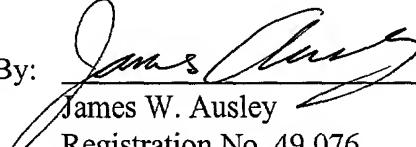
These changes are being made to bring the subject application into better conformance with U.S. practice and to more distinctly claim what the Applicant regards as the invention. No new matter is being introduced. Entrance of the amendment is respectfully requested. Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

Respectfully submitted,

KNOBBE, MARTENS, OLSON & BEAR, LLP

Dated: 12/12/01

By:


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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

Abstract of the Disclosure

A bill acceptor [24.2] for a gaming machine [includes] **including** a receiving zone for receiving a tendered bill. A sensing device [48] is arranged at an input region of the receiving zone for sensing at least one characteristic of the bill. A controller [52] is in communication with the sensing device [48] for receiving an output signal from the sensing device [48]. An annunciator [58] is controlled by the controller [52] to be activated when a bill acceptance rate of the controller [52] drops below a predetermined threshold.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the Claims as follows:

[I] WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

5. (Amended) The bill acceptor of Claim 2, in which the receiving zone includes an [attracting means] **indicator** for indicating to a patron where the bill is to be inserted into the slot.

6. (Amended) The bill acceptor of Claim 5, in which the [attracting means] **indicator** comprises an array of illuminating elements arranged in the platen of the receiving zone.

10. (Amended) The bill acceptor of Claim 1, in which, when the controller is connected to a network, a network monitoring system monitors the acceptance rate of bills by the controller and activates an alarm [means] when the acceptance rate drops below the predetermined threshold.

12. (Amended) The method of Claim 11, [which includes] **further comprising** illuminating elements of the bill acceptor in a predetermined pattern and, when the bill acceptance rate drops below [said] **the** threshold, energizing the illuminating elements in a second, different pattern, [said] **the** second pattern of illumination of the illuminating elements serving as the annunciator.

14. (Amended) The method of Claim 11, [which includes] **further comprising** transmitting a signal on a network to which the gaming machine is connected to a network monitoring system to activate an alarm [means] when the bill acceptance rate drops below [said] **the** predetermined threshold.